

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

VIII. FLEXIBLE STAFFING AND COUPLED CLASSES

A. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to describe policies and procedures for establishing, reclassifying and filling flexibly staffed positions, or coupled positions and classes.

B. Scope

This SOP applies to permanent positions in the classified or partially exempt service which are covered by flexible staffing or coupled class agreements.

C. Authority

2 AAC 07.020 Allocation of positions
2 AAC 07.025 Maintenance of descriptions
2 AAC 07.035 Effective Dates
2 AAC 07.185 Subfill

D. Flexible Staffing

1. General Information

Flexible staffing is a management tool designed primarily to aid recruitment, retain a work force, facilitate entry into a chosen occupational field, provide a promotional training device and ladder, streamline the "reclassification" process and reduce paperwork.

Flexible staffing is **only** appropriate for a job class series that include both trainee and journey levels. Flexible staffing provides the maximum flexibility to hiring managers for the staffing of positions. Departments are usually influenced by the availability of qualified personnel at the working level in making their choices. Under flexible staffing, the user agency has the option of filling a position at either the trainee or journey level. Upon request, the Classification Section or the department's human resources office, specifically takes the classification action to move a position from one level to the other.

Incumbents of flexibly staffed positions at a trainee level must successfully complete the training plan. Failure to successfully

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complete training within a reasonable period of time, including time to correct deficiencies, is grounds for non-retention or separation from the flexibly staffed position. The department then requests reclassification, or takes action to reclassify the position to the higher level through flexible staffing. Management retains responsibility for deciding whether the incumbent is actually prepared to perform at the higher level.

2. Requests

Flexible staffing for a position may be requested from the Division of Personnel when the following conditions are met. (See Addendum A).

- a. The class series includes a journey level class appropriate for the agency; and,
- b. The lower level class specification defines a class or classes which should be appropriate for an employee in training to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to reach the journey level of work; and,
- c. The employing agency has a training plan which demonstrates how the employee will be trained to perform journey level work, and flexible staffing criteria which will indicate when training has been achieved. (See Addendum A); and
- d. The Position Description (PD) must describe the duties of each level. This eliminates the necessity for a new PD each time the position is moved up or down.

3. Approvals

Initial approval by the Division of Personnel is required before a department may designate a position as flexibly staffed and reclassify it as such under delegated authority.

4. Procedures for Reclassifying Positions

- a. When vacant, a department may request that a position be reallocated to any level covered by the flexible staffing agreement or take the action under delegated authority.

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- b. When the incumbent employee successfully completes a trainee level **and meets the minimum qualifications of the higher level (i.e., must have served the number of years required in the minimum qualifications, even if performing duties at the higher level)**, the department takes action under delegated authority to reclassify the position to the higher level.
- c. A form memorandum is sufficient to accomplish the reclassification. (See Addendum B). The original is filed in the PCN file.
- d. The Classification Section maintains a log of flexibly staffed positions.

E. Coupled Classes

As in flexible staffing, the concept of coupled classes is based on the determination that there is an entry working level involved which the employee must successfully complete (usually a maximum of 12 months) before promotion to the next working level of the job class series. The coupled class designation applies to an entire job class rather than a single position as in flexible staffing. With coupled classes, **specific training** is needed and provided to **all** new employees, prior to promotion into the next working level. The incumbent then receives the specific training from entry (trainee) to full working level. Upon certification of the employing manager that the training has been satisfactorily completed, the incumbent is promoted. Under this arrangement, the position is permanently allocated to the full working level of the specific job class series. While rehires, layoffs and transfers may be available when a position becomes vacant, the position will normally be filled at the lower level through the subfill mechanism of the Personnel Rules and collective bargaining agreements.

Requests

To establish a coupled class agreement, contact the Classification Section. After analyzing the appropriateness and the minimum qualifications of the target class, it will be revised and a coupled class agreement memorandum written by the Classification Section will be provided.

A list of coupled classes is kept in the Division of Personnel. (See Addendum C.)

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